

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the present application. Claims 8-16 have been withdrawn in response to a restriction requirement. With entry of this Amendment, Applicants cancel claims 1, 4, and 5 without prejudice, amend claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 and add new claims 17-21.

Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims are respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by admitted prior art. Claim 4 was rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Konuma (US 6,127,279). The Examiner rejected claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Kamikawa (US 6,119,367).

The present invention relates generally to processing surfaces of substrates. In one embodiment, a hydrophilic process is employed to supply the substrate with an ozone water having a concentration ranging from 0.5 to 10 PPM, thereby to form an oxidation film having a thickness from 6 to 10 Å on the surface of the substrate for providing hydrophilicity therefor. This concentration prevents the resist pattern from being dissolved by the ozone water and provides the substrate with an oxidation film having the film-thickness required to be hydrophilic (see, e.g., specification at page 11, lines 3-23).

In contrast, none of the cited references disclose a hydrophilic process to supply the substrate with an ozone water having a concentration range from 0.5 to 10 PPM and an oxidation film having a thickness ranging from 6 to 10 Å formed on the surface of the substrate for providing hydrophilicity.

New claim 17 recites a hydrophilic process "to supply the substrate with an ozone water having a concentration ranging from 0.5 to 10 PPM, thereby to form an oxidation film having a thickness from 6 to 10 Å on the surface of the substrate for providing hydrophilicity therefor". Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 is not anticipated by or obvious in view of the cited references either alone or in combination.

Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to depend from claim 17 and new claims 18 and 19 also depend from claim 17. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, 18 and 19 are not anticipated by or obvious in view of the cited references either alone or in combination.

Another embodiment of the present invention is directed to processing wafers having resist pattern formed thereon and also wafers with no resist pattern effectively. The methods can be carried out selectively in the same processing container. None of the cited references discloses this feature.

New claim 20 recites "the method for the substrate having the resist pattern formed thereon or the method for the substrate having no resist pattern formed thereon is carried out selectively in a same processing container." Applicants respectfully submit that claim 20 is not anticipated by or obvious in view of the cited references either alone or in combination.

Claims 6 and 7 have been amended to depend from claim 20 and new claim 21 also depends from claim 20. Accordingly, claims 6, 7 and 21 are not anticipated by or obvious in view of the cited references either alone or in combination.

If view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2, 3, 6, 7 and 17-21 of the present application are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner feels that it would advance the prosecution of the application, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned attorney.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 199372003600.

Respectfully submitted,



Dated: April 23, 2003

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